881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
595 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about. Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of
● [684] the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities." [595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two of three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, 591 doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having 684 affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

595 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

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582 583 836 [415] [482] the carrying-net, as much as possible. On the way home he will not assist her to place the *yica* in position. She must seat herself in order to place the band round her forehead and then rise unaided. They then proceed homewards. If the girl has been unable to adjust the yica or to carry it home in one stretch, the man will leave her the same afternoon. A strong and industrious man is not suited to a lazy wife, and vice versa.

581 584 It was definitely maintained that even a strong passion was not sufficient to keep a pair together. Even though the initial choice—made by the girl—was primarily based on affection, the second choice—in which both parties and their parents participate—is the decisive one, and this is based on a number of sensible considerations of an economic and social nature. Here it is particularly the girl's father who plays the decisive part, but as a rule he allows his view to be signified to the daughter through the mother. The girl can flout her parents' advice and marry as she likes, but this type of marriage is not regarded as durable. Normally she follows the advice, and there were times when a father requested a young man to abstain from visiting his daughter. The motives responsible for this appear primarily to be of an economic character. The girl's parents desire [591] an able fisher and hunter as their son-in-law for—with the prevalent matrilocality —they will be very dependent upon a son-in-law's ability to provide.

581 [577] [684] In earlier days bravery in war was considered to be an equally important factor, but this is no longer the case as the need for it has disappeared. On the other hand the girl's father considers it important that the son-in-law should possess a balanced temperament. Irascibility is deemed to be a great vice, in Mataco eyes perhaps the greatest, and, leads for example, in cases of infidelity straight to homicide and blood feuds between the families. In addition it was 582 considered a bad thing to marry into your own band. It was never explained as a ban or incest, but rather as a foolish disposition, because one lost the advantage of having another band, *wikyl*, to rely upon in case of controversial questions. This natural need for strength has caused the Mataco to prefer band-exogamy, and, for example, in the village Yuto on the Rio Pilcomayo, 81 out 88 controlled marriages were exogamous. This system is also considered advantageous by the young men, for even though they stood alone as a stranger in the daily life of their wife's family, they realized that both they and their children might stand in need of aid from another, powerful band. Much suggests that the Mataco 621 bands were formally more locally bound, so that a village consisted in principle 178 of one or two bands plus foreign males-in-law, and one still often sees strangers, [584] young men and girls, come to a village dancing-place in order to seek a sweetheart. Nowadays, however, it is quite easy to find a suitable partner within one's own village because many different bands are now represented there. This mixing is particularly due to the general dispersal of local groups that took place during [797] the Chaco war of the thirties, and a later coming together under the care of the British evangelical mission in accordance with quite different principles. Formerly

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837 within a marriage, distinction is made between the unfaithfulness of a man and of a woman, the latter's being considered the more serious offence. If a man commits adultery it is often said that a young girl has intervened. In that case the wife—when she realizes what is going on—with some of her female relatives, attacks the girl. For this reason, in earlier days particularly, girls never cut their [302] nails in order that they could draw blood from any rival. It is noteworthy that whereas the wife obtains the help of her female relations, the same is not so in [602] the case of the intervening girl. Her family maintains "that it is not worth fighting about", but in view of the absolute solidarity that is customary within families, it must mean that her conduct is regarded as positively wrong, by her own kin, that is to say, socially.

In the event that a man should have fled with the intervener, the wife and her female relatives pursue them and attempt by force to drag back the man. As a rule they are successfull in this, because the other men will not concern themselves about it, considering it a purely feminine affair. When a man is unfaithful 684 and is regarded as the active party, he also risks being beaten to his senses by his wife and her female relatives. On one occasion I saw a young man beaten black and blue and thrown out of his house. He had had relations in the forest with a girl, and had been seen by another woman who told his wife of it. When the man returned home and had lain down to sleep he was beaten almost unconscious by his wife, her sister, and a third woman in order to teach him to behave better. No one in the village wished to intervene. A man who persists in infidelity will be [586] reproached, even by his own relations, and his wife has the right to leave him without incurring censure.

As a rule a woman's unfaithfulness will have more far-reaching results than that of a man. In the first place the husband does not trouble to consider whether the wife is the seducer or the seduced, but always gives her the blame. Her fate depends upon the temperament of her husband. If he discovers her, he can beat her in order that her behaviour shall be improved, and in that event he seldom does anything to his rival. As a rule, however, he will at once divorce her and [586] chase her away. Her family will make no protest, and will at most vilify her for having behaved badly. It is said that the reason why a man wants to be divorced at once is because he thinks that she will be unfaithful to him again and again, so that at last he will lose his head and attempt to kill her and her lover. There are 628 numerous examples of this: the wife will perhaps fly with her lover to another 682 village, but the husband will follow them, concealing himself until the evening dance begins. He will then steal into the chain of dancers and wait for a good opportunity—a pause in the dance—when he can kill first his rival and then his wife whilst they are together. He flees back to his family under cover of darkness, but will seldom be pursued because the village will wait until the morning to find the killer's tracks and thus identify him. Every Mataco knows the footprints [822] of all his village fellows, and often many more. A member of the dead man's

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586 [577] Laziness and incompetence are other things that often lead to divorce. If it is the woman who justly is accused of these faults she can be forced out of the house and her parents will take no counter steps. If in such circumstances there are small children in the marriage, she may be allowed to take them, but if the husband continues to send them small gifts and food he retains the right to them and gets them back at an age of 5–6, as they belong to his band. If, on the other hand, he fails to show them any attention, he loses them and may not even be allowed to play with them. Should it be the man who is lazy, his wife makes no mention of it but her parents become angry with him. One day when the man is out seeking food, the parents exhort their daughter to hide herself with some family. When the husband returns home he discovers what is going on without his in-laws saying anything to him. He also says nothing, but begins to collect his things together. He will not leave the house until nightfall, unseen, because he is ashamed, and then return to his family. It is said that this custom was far more widespread [178] a generation ago than it is now. Several women, with a smile, expressed their relief at this as "they would never manage to have any fun out of a man before he was kicked out by his in-laws, for nowadays all men are lazy".

[842] The third—and last—cause of divorce socially recognized is: childless marriages. It is always the woman who is considered to be sterile, and consequently the man who takes the initiative for divorce. However, in such cases it is he who leaves the house, presumably because he has already sought contact with a possible [587] new wife. His sister may help him to get into touch with one of her friends and let them meet secretly in the forest to discover whether they like each other. The man thus leaves the house as he falls under the rule governing unfaithful husband, and not because his wife is sterile.

[587] [589] Whatever the reason for a Mataco divorce, it is always a heavy blow, both morally and economically, for the spouse that is left. The economic loss can only be made good by re-marriage, and this nearly always takes place. Unmarried persons are reduced to living partly on the bounty of the family as occupations are so sharply divided according to sex.

762 A person who feels himself rejected or a victim of unhappy love sometimes commits suicide, which with the Mataco appears to occur particularly in this connexion and is always done in the same manner. The unfortunate one goes [278] alone into the forest and collects the very poisonous fruit of the *sacha sandia* (Capparis salicifolia), which the Indian then cooks lightly and eats. After a few hours when no remedy is possible, the Indian returns home and lies down to sleep. Death comes very shortly. In cases of suicide the spouse of the dead person will [682] always be pointed to as the one responsible. In consequence, the family of the dead person will in many cases start a campaign against that of the spouse to obtain blood vengeance or, more probably, to secure economic compensation.

182 According to Mataco unwritten law infidelity is severely punished by the loss 684 of home and children. This should occasion no surprise, for adultery, on account 628

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of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

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